

FATHER AND SON

A STUDY OF TWO TEMPERAMENTS

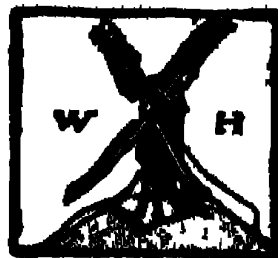
BY

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Der Glaube ist wie die Liebe ;
er lässt sich nicht erzwingen

SCHOPENHAUER



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PREFACE

At the present hour, when fiction takes forms so ingenious and so specious it is perhaps necessary to say that the following narrative in all its parts, and so far as the punctilious attention of the writer has been able to keep it so is scrupulously true. If it were not true in this strict sense, to publish it would be to trifle with all those who may be induced to read it. It is offered to them as a *document*, as a record of educational and religious conditions which having passed away will never return. In this respect, as the diagnosis of a dying Puritanism, it is hoped that the narrative will not be altogether without significance.

It offers too in a subsidiary sense, a study of the development of moral and intellectual ideas during the progress of infancy. These have been closely and conscientiously noted and may have some value in consequence of the unusual conditions in which they were produced. The author has observed that those who have written about the facts of their own childhood have usually delayed to note them down until age has dimmed their recollections. Perhaps an even more common fault in such autobiographies is that they are sentimental, and are falsified by self-admiration and self-pity. The writer of these recollections has

thought that if the examination of his earliest years was to be undertaken at all, it should be attempted while his memory is still perfectly vivid and while he is still unbiased by the sensibility of advancing years.

At one point only has there been any tampering with precise fact. It is believed that, with the exception of the Son, there is but one person mentioned in this book who is still alive. Nevertheless, it has been thought well, in order to avoid any appearance of offence, to alter several of the proper names of the private persons spoken of.

It is not usual, perhaps, that the narrative of a spiritual struggle should mingle memento and irony with a discussion of the most solemn subjects. It has, however, been inevitable that they should be so mingled in this narrative. It is true that most funny books try to be funny throughout, while theology is scandalised if it awakens a single smile. But life is not constituted thus, and this book is nothing if it is not a genuine slice of life. There was an extraordinary mixture of comedy and tragedy in the situation which is here described, and those who are affected by the pathos of it will not need to have it explained to them that the comedy was superficial and the tragedy essential.

September 1907

CHAPTER I

THIS book is the record of a struggle between two temperaments, two consciences and almost two epochs. It ended, as was inevitable, in disruption. Of the two human beings here described, one was born to fly backward, the other could not help being carried forward. There came a time when neither spoke the same language as the other, or encompassed the same hopes, or was fortified by the same desires. But, at least, it is some consolation to the survivor, that neither, to the very last hour, ceased to respect the other, or to regard him with a sad indulgence.

The affection of these two persons was assailed by forces in comparison with which the changes that health or fortune or place introduce are as nothing. It is a mournful satisfaction, but yet a satisfaction, that they were both of them able to obey the law which says that ties of close family relationship must be honoured and sustained. Had it not been so, this story would never have been told.

The struggle began soon yet of course it did not begin in early infancy. But to familiarise my readers with the conditions of the two persons (which were unusual) and with the outlines of their temperaments (which were, perhaps innately, antagonistic), it is needful to open with some account of all that I can truly and independently recollect as well as with some statements which are, as will be obvious due to household tradition.

My parents were poor gentlefolk, not young, solitary, sensitive and although they did not know it proud. They both belonged to what is called the Middle Class and there was this further resemblance between them that they each descended from families which had been more than well-to-do in the eighteenth century, and had gradually sunken in fortune. In both houses there had been a decay of energy which had led to decay in wealth. In the case of my Father's family it had been a slow decline, in that of my Mother's, it had been rapid. My maternal grandfather was born wealthy, and in the opening years of the nineteenth century, immediately after his marriage he bought a little estate in North Wales, on the slopes of Snowdon. Here he seems to have lived in a pretentious way, keeping a pack of hounds and entertaining on an extravagant scale. He had a wife who encouraged him in his vivid life, and three children, my

Mother and her two brothers. His best trait was his devotion to the education of his children, in which he proclaimed himself a disciple of Rousseau. But he can hardly have followed the teaching of "Émile" very closely, since he employed tutors to teach his daughter, at an extremely early age, the very subjects which Rousseau forbade, such as history, literature and foreign languages.

My Mother was his special favourite, and his vanity did its best to make a blue-stocking of her. She read Greek, Latin and even a little Hebrew, and, what was more important, her mind was trained to be self-supporting. But she was diametrically opposed in essential matters to her easy-going, luxurious and self-indulgent parents. Reviewing her life in her thirtieth year, she remarked in some secret notes: "I cannot recollect the time when I did not love religion." She used a still more remarkable expression: "If I must date my conversion from my first wish and trial to be holy, I may go back to infancy; if I am to postpone it till after my last wilful sin, it is scarcely yet begun." The irregular pleasures of her parents' life were deeply distasteful to her, as such were to many young persons in those days of the wide revival of Conscience, and when my grandfather, by his reckless expenditure, which he never checked till ruin was upon him, was obliged to sell his estate,

and live in penury, my Mother was the only member of the family who did not regret the change. For my own part, I believe I should have liked my reprobate maternal grandfather, but his conduct was certainly very vexatious. He died in his eightieth year when I was nine months old.

It was a curious coincidence that life had brought both my parents along similar paths to an almost identical position in respect to religious belief. She had started from the Anglican standpoint, he from the Wesleyan, and each, almost without counsel from others and after varied theological experiments, had come to take up precisely the same attitude towards all divisions of the Protestant Church—that, namely, of detached and unbiased contemplation. So far as the sects agreed with my Father and my Mother, the sects were walking in the light; wherever they differed from them, they had slipped more or less definitely into a penumbra of their own making, a darkness into which neither of my parents would follow them. Hence by a process of selection, my Father and my Mother alike had gradually, without violence, found themselves shut outside all Protestant communions, and at last they met only with a few extreme Calvinists like themselves on terms of what may almost be called negation—with no priest, no ritual, no festivals, no ornament of any kind, nothing but

the Lord's Supper and the exposition of the Holy Scripture drawing these austere spirits into any sort of cohesion. They called themselves "the Brethren," simply ; a title enlarged by the world outside into "Plymouth Brethren."

It was accident and similarity which brought my parents together at these meetings of the Brethren. Each was lonely, each was poor, each was accustomed to a strenuous intellectual self-support. He was nearly thirty-eight, she was past forty-two, when they married. From a suburban lodging, he brought her home to his mother's little house in the north-east of London without a single day's honeymoon. My Father was a zoologist, and a writer of books on natural history ; my Mother also was a writer, author already of two slender volumes of religious verse—the earlier of which, I know not how, must have enjoyed some slight success, since a second edition was printed—afterwards she devoted her pen to popular works of edification. But how infinitely removed in their aims, their habits, their ambitions from "literary" people of the present day, words are scarcely adequate to describe. Neither knew nor cared about any manifestation of current literature. For each there had been no poet later than Byron, and neither had read a romance since, in childhood, they had dipped into the Waverley Novels as they appeared in succession. For each the various forms of imagina-

tive and scientific literature were merely means of improvement and profit, which kept the student "out of the world," gave him full employment, and enabled him to maintain himself. But pleasure was found nowhere but in the Word of God, and to the endless discussion of the Scriptures each hurried when the day's work was over.

In this strange household the advent of a child was not welcomed, but was borne with resignation. The event was thus recorded in my Father's diary :

" E. delivered of a son. Received green swallow from Jamaica."

This entry has caused amusement, as showing that he was as much interested in the bird as in the boy. But this does not follow; what the wording exemplifies is my Father's extreme punctilio. The green swallow arrived later in the day than the son, and the earlier visitor was therefore recorded first; my Father was scrupulous in every species of arrangement.

Long afterwards, my Father told me that my Mother suffered much in giving birth to me, and that, uttering no cry, I appeared to be dead. I was laid, with scant care, on another bed in the room, while all anxiety and attention were concentrated on my Mother. An old woman who happened to be there, and who was unemployed, turned her thoughts to me, and tried to awake in me a spark of vitality. She succeeded, and

she was afterwards complimented by the doctor on her cleverness. My Father could not—when he told me the story—recollect the name of my preserver. I have often longed to know who she was. For all the rapture of life, for all its turmoils, its anxious desires, its manifold pleasures, and even for its sorrow and suffering, I bless and praise that anonymous old lady from the bottom of my heart.

It was six weeks before my Mother was able to leave her room. The occasion was made a solemn day, and was attended by a species of Churching. Mr. Balfour, a valued minister of the denomination, held a private service in the parlour, and “prayed for our child, that he may be the Lord’s” This was the opening act of that “dedication” which was never henceforward forgotten, and of which the following pages will endeavour to describe the results. Around my tender and unconscious spirit was flung the luminous web, the light and elastic but impermeable veil, which it was hoped would keep me “unspotted from the world.”

Until this time my Father’s mother had lived in the house and taken the domestic charges of it on her own shoulders. She now consented to leave us to ourselves. There is no question that her exodus was a relief to my Mother, since my paternal grandmother was a strong and masterful woman, buxom, choleric and practical,

for whom the interests of the mind did not exist. Her daughter-in-law, gentle as she was, and ethereal in manner and appearance—strangely contrasted (no doubt), in her tinctures of gold hair and white skin with my grandmother's bold carnations and black tresses—was yet possessed of a will like tempered steel. They were better friends apart with my Grandmother lodged hard by in a bright room, her household gods and bits of excellent eighteenth century furniture around her her miniatures and sparkling china arranged on shelves.

Left to my Mother, sole care I became the centre of her solicitude. But there mingled with those happy animal instincts which sustain the strength and patience of every human mother, and were fully present with her—there mingled with these certain spiritual determinations which can but be rare. They are, in their outline, I suppose vaguely common to many religious mothers, but there are few indeed who fill up the sketch with so firm a detail as she did. Once again I am indebted to her secret notes, in a little locked volume seen until now, nearly sixty years later by no eye save her own. Thus she wrote when I was two months old.

“We have given him to the Lord, and we trust that He will really manifest him to be His own, if he grow up, and if the Lord take him

early, we will not doubt that he is taken to Himself. Only, if it please the Lord to take him, I do trust we may be spared seeing him suffering in lingering illness and much pain. But in this as in all things His will is better than what we can choose. Whether his life be prolonged or not, it has already been a blessing to us, and to the saints, in leading us to much prayer, and bringing us into varied need and some trial."

The last sentence is somewhat obscure to me. How, at what tender age, I contrived to be a blessing "to the saints" may surprise others and puzzles myself. But "the saints" was the habitual term by which were indicated the friends who met on Sunday mornings for Holy Communion, and at many other times in the week for prayer and discussion of the Scriptures, in the small hired hall at Hackney, which my parents attended. I suppose that the solemn dedication of me to the Lord, which was repeated in public in my Mother's arms, being by no means a usual or familiar ceremony even among the Brethren, created a certain curiosity and fervour in the immediate services, or was imagined so to do by the fond, partial heart of my Mother. She, however, who had been so much isolated, now made the care of her child an excuse for retiring still further into silence. With those religious persons who met at the Room, as the modest,

chapel was called, she had little spiritual and no intellectual sympathy. She noted.

"I do not think it would increase my happiness to be in the midst of the saints at Hackney. I have made up my mind to give myself up to Baby for the winter and to accept no invitations. I go when I can to the Sunday morning meetings and to see my own Mother."

The monotony of her existence now became extreme, but she seems to have been happy. Her days were spent in taking care of me, and in directing one young servant. My father was for ever in his study, writing, drawing, dissecting, sitting no doubt, as I grew afterwards accustomed to see him, absolutely motionless with his eye glued to the microscope, for twenty minutes at a time. So the greater part of every week-day was spent and on Sunday he usually preached one, and sometimes two extempore sermons. His work-day labours were rewarded by the praise of the learned world, to which he was indifferent but by very little money, which he needed more. For over three years after their marriage, neither of my parents left London for a single day, not being able to afford to travel. They received scarcely any visitors, never ate a meal away from home, never spent an evening in social intercourse abroad. At night they

discussed theology, read aloud to one another, or translated scientific brochures from French or German. It sounds a terrible life of pressure and deprivation, and that it was physically unwholesome there can be no shadow of a doubt. But their contentment was complete and unfeigned. In the midst of this materially, the hardest moment of their lives when I was one year old, and there was a question of our leaving London, my Mother recorded in her secret notes —

"We are happy and contented, having all things needful and pleasant and our present habitation is hallowed by many sweet associations. We have our house to ourselves and enjoy each other's society. If we move we shall no longer be alone. The situation may be more favourable, however, for Baby, as being more in the country. I desire to have no choice in the matter, but as I know not what would be for our good, and God knows, so I desire to leave it with Him, and if it is not His will we should move, He will raise objections and difficulties, and if it is His will He will make Henry [my Father] desirous and anxious to take the step, and then, whatever the result, let us leave all to Him and not regret it."

No one who is acquainted with the human heart will mistake this attitude of resignation

for weakness of purpose It was not poverty of will it was abnegation it was a voluntary act. My Mother, underneath an exquisite amenity of manner, concealed a rigour of spirit which took the form of a constant self denial For it to dawn upon her consciousness that she wished for something, was definitely to renounce that wish, or, more exactly, to subject it in every thing to what she conceived to be the will of God

This is perhaps the right moment for me to say that at this time, and indeed until the hour of her death she exercised without suspecting it a magnetic power over the will and nature of my Father Both were strong but my Mother was unquestionably the stronger of the two, it was her mind which gradually drew his to take up a certain definite position and this remained permanent although she, the cause of it, was early removed Hence while it was with my Father that the long struggle which I have to narrate took place, behind my Father stood the ethereal memory of my Mother's will, guiding him pressing him holding him to the unswerving purpose which she had formed and defined And when the inevitable disruption came, what^o was unspeakably painful was to realise that it was not from one, but from both parents that the purpose of the child was separated.

My Mother was a Puritan in grain, and never a word escaped her, not a phrase exists in her

diary, to suggest that she had any privations to put up with. She seemed strong and well, and so did I; the one of us who broke down was my Father. With his attack of acute nervous dyspepsia came an unexpected small accession of money, and we were able, in my third year, to take a holiday of nearly ten months in Devonshire. The extreme seclusion, the unbroken strain, were never repeated, and when we returned to London, it was to conditions of greater amenity and to a less rigid practice of "the world forgetting by the world forgot." That this relaxation was more relative than positive, and that nothing ever really tempted either of my parents from their cavern in an intellectual Thebaid, my recollections will amply prove. But each of them was forced by circumstances into a more or less public position, and neither could any longer quite ignore the world around.

It is not my business here to rewrite the biographies of my parents. Each of them became, in a certain measure, celebrated, and each was the subject of a good deal of contemporary discussion. Each was prominent before the eyes of a public of his or her own, half a century ago. It is because their minds were vigorous and their accomplishments distinguished that the contrast between their spiritual point of view and the aspect of a similar class of persons to-day is interesting and may, I hope, be instructive. But this

is not another memoir of public individuals, each
of whom has had more than one biographer
My serious duty as I venture to hold it is other ,

that's the world's side

Thus men saw them praised them thought they knew
them !

There in turn, I stood aside and praised them !

Out of my own self I dare to phrase it

But this is a different inspection, this is a study
of

the other side, the novel

Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of, *

the record of a state of soul once not uncommon
in Protestant Europe of which my parents were
perhaps the latest consistent exemplars among
people of light and leading

The peculiarities of a family life founded
upon such principles are in relation to a little
child obvious, but I may be permitted to re-
capitulate them. Here was perfect purity, per-
fect intrepidity, perfect abnegation, yet here
was also narrowness isolation an absence of
perspective let it be boldly admitted an absence
of humanity. And there was a curious mixture
of humbleness and arrogance, entire resignation
to the will of God and not less entire disdain
of the judgment and opinion of man. My parents
founded every action every attitude, upon their
interpretation of the Scriptures, and upon the

guidance of the Divine Will as revealed to them by direct answer to prayer. Their ejaculation in the face of any dilemma was, "Let us cast it before the Lord!"

So confident were they of the reality of their intercourse with God, that they asked for no other guide. They recognised no spiritual authority among men, they subjected themselves to no priest or minister, they troubled their consciences about no current manifestation of "religious opinion." They lived in an intellectual cell, bounded at its sides by the walls of their own house, but open above to the very heart of the uttermost heavens.

This, then, was the scene in which the soul of a little child was planted, not as in an ordinary open flower-border or carefully tended social parterre, but as on a ledge, split in the granite of some mountain. The ledge was hung between night and the snows on one hand, and the dizzy depths of the world upon the other; was furnished with just soil enough for a gentian to struggle skywards and open its stiff azure stars; and offered no lodgment, no hope of salvation, to any rootlet which should stray beyond its inexorable limits.

CHAPTER II

OUT of the darkness of my infancy there comes only one flash of memory. I am seated alone, in my baby-chair, at a dinner-table set for several people. Somebody brings in a leg of mutton, puts it down close to me, and goes out. I am again alone, gazing at two low windows, wide open upon a garden. Suddenly, noiselessly, a large, long animal (obviously a greyhound) appears at one window-sill, slips into the room, seizes the leg of mutton and slips out again. When this happened I could not yet talk. The accomplishment of speech came to me very late,^e doubtless because I never heard young voices. Many years later, when I mentioned this recollection, there was a shout of laughter and surprise :

“ That, then, was what became of the mutton ! It was not you, who, as your Uncle A. pretended, ate it up, in the twinkling of an eye, bone and all ! ”

I suppose that it was the startling intensity of this incident which stamped it upon a memory

from which all other impressions of this early date have vanished.

The adventure of the leg of mutton occurred, evidently, at the house of my Mother's brothers, for my parents, at this date, visited no other. My uncles were not religious men, but they had an almost filial respect for my Mother, who was several years senior to the elder of them. When the catastrophe of my Grandfather's fortune had occurred, they had not yet left school. My Mother, in spite of an extreme dislike of teaching, which was native to her, immediately accepted the situation of a governess in the family of an Irish nobleman. The mansion was only to be approached, as Miss Edgeworth would have said, "through eighteen sloughs, at the imminent peril of one's life," and when one had reached it, the mixture of opulence and squalor, of civility and savagery, was unspeakable. But my Mother was well paid, and she stayed in this distasteful environment, doing the work she hated most, while with the margin of her salary she helped first one of her brothers and then the other through his Cambridge course. They studied hard and did well at the university. At length their sister received, in her *ultima Thule*, news that her younger brother had taken his degree, and then and there, with a sigh of intense relief, she resigned her situation and came straight back to England.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that my uncles looked up to their sister with feelings of especial devotion. They were not inclined, they were hardly in a position, to criticise her modes of thought. They were easy-going, 'cultured and kindly gentlemen, rather limited in their views, without a trace of their sister's force of intellect or her strenuous temper. E. resembled her in person; he was tall, fair, with auburn curls; he cultivated a certain tendency to the Byronic type, fatal and melancholy. A. was short, brown, and jocose, with a pretension to common sense; bluff and chatty. As a little child, I adored my Uncle E., who sat silent by the fireside, holding me against his knee, saying nothing, but looking unutterably sad, and occasionally shaking his warm-coloured tresses. With great injustice, on the other hand, I detested my Uncle A., because he used to joke in a manner very displeasing to me, and because he would so far forget himself as to chase, and even, if it will be credited, to tickle me. My uncles, who remained bachelors to the end of their lives, earned a comfortable living, E. by teaching, A. as "something in the City," and they rented an old rambling house in Clapton, that same in which I saw the greyhound. Their house had a strange, delicious smell, so unlike anything I smelt anywhere else, that it used to fill my eyes with tears of mysterious pleasure. I know now that this was the odour of

cigars, tobacco being a species of incense tabooed at home on the highest religious grounds.

It has been recorded that I was slow in learning to speak. I used to be told that having met all invitations to repeat such words as "Papa" and "Mamma" with gravity and indifference, I one day drew towards me a volume, and said "book" with startling distinctness. I was not at all precocious, but at a rather early age, I think towards the beginning of my fourth year, I learned to read. I cannot recollect a time when a printed page of English was closed to me. But perhaps earlier still my Mother used to repeat to me a poem which I have always taken for granted that she had herself composed, a poem which had a romantic place in my early mental history. It ran thus, I think :

O pretty Moon, you shine so bright!
I'll go to bid Mamma good-night,
And then I'll lie upon my bed
And watch you move above my head.

Ah! there, a cloud has hidden you!
But I can see your light shine thro' ;
It tries to hide you—quite in vain,
For—there you quickly come again.

It's God, I know, that makes you shine
Upon this little bed of mine;
But I shall all about you know
When I can read and older grow.

Long, long after the last line had become an

anachronism, I used to shout this poem from my bed before I went to sleep, whether the night happened to be moon-lit or no.

It must have been my Father who taught me my letters. To my Mother, as I have said, it was distasteful to teach, though she was so prompt and skilful to learn. My Father, on the contrary, taught cheerfully, by fits and starts. In particular, he had a scheme for rationalising geography, which I think was admirable. I was to climb upon a chair, while, standing at my side, with a pencil and a sheet of paper, he was to draw a chart of the markings on the carpet. Then, when I understood the system, another chart on a smaller scale of the furniture in the room, then of a floor of the house, then of the back-garden, then of a section of the street. The result of this was that geography came to me of itself, as a perfectly natural miniature arrangement of objects, and to this day has always been the science which gives me least difficulty. My Father also taught me the simple rules of arithmetic, a little natural history, and the elements of drawing; and he laboured long and unsuccessfully to make me learn by heart hymns, psalms and chapters of Scripture, in which I always failed ignominiously and with tears. This puzzled and vexed him, for he himself had an extremely retentive textual memory. He could not help thinking that I was naughty,

and would not learn the chapters, until at last he gave up the effort. All this sketch of an education began, I believe, in my fourth year, and was not advanced or modified during the rest of my Mother's life.

Meanwhile, capable as I was of reading, I found my greatest pleasure in the pages of books. The range of these was limited, for story-books of every description were sternly excluded. No fiction of any kind, religious or secular, was admitted into the house. In this it was to my Mother, not to my Father, that the prohibition was due. She had a remarkable, I confess to me still somewhat unaccountable impression, that to "tell a story," that is, to compose fictitious narrative of any kind, was a sin. She carried this conviction to extreme lengths. My Father, in later years, gave me some interesting examples of her firmness. As a young man in America, he had been deeply impressed by "Salathiel," a pious prose romance of that then popular writer, the Rev. George Croly. When he first met my Mother, he recommended it to her, but she would not consent to open it. Nor would she read the chivalrous tales in verse of Sir Walter Scott, obstinately alleging that they were not "true." She would read none but lyrical and subjective poetry. Her secret diary reveals the history of this singular aversion to the fictitious, although it cannot be said to explain the cause of it. As a

child, however, she had possessed a passion for making up stories, and so considerable a skill in it that she was constantly being begged to indulge others with its exercise. But I will, on so curious a point, leave her to speak for herself :

“ When I was a very little child, I used to amuse myself and my brothers with inventing stories, such as I read. Having, as I suppose, naturally a restless mind and busy imagination, this soon became the chief pleasure of my life. Unfortunately, my brothers were always fond of encouraging this propensity, and I found in Taylor, my maid, a still greater tempter. I had not known there was any harm in it, until Miss Shore [a Calvinist governess], finding it out, lectured me severely, and told me it was wicked. From that time forth I considered that to invent a story of any kind was a sin. But the desire to do so was too deeply rooted in my affections, to be resisted in my own strength [she was at that time nine years of age], and unfortunately I knew neither my corruption nor my weakness, nor did I know where to gain strength. The longing to invent stories grew with violence ; everything I heard or read became food for my distemper. The simplicity of truth was not sufficient for me ; I must needs embroider imagination upon it, and the folly, vanity, and wickedness which disgraced my heart are more than I am

able to express Even now [at the age of twenty-nine] tho' watched played and striven against, that is still the sin that most easily besets me It has hindered my prayers and prevented my improvement and therefore has humbled me very much "

This is surely a very painful instance of the repression of an instinct There seems to have been, in this case a vocation such as is rarely heard and still less often wilfully disregarded and silenced Was my Mother intended by nature to be a novelist? I have often thought so and her talents and vigour of purpose directed along the line which was ready to form "the chief pleasure of her life" could hardly have failed to conduct her to great success She was a little younger than Bulwer Lytton a little older than Mrs Gaskell—but these are vain and trivial speculations!

My own state however was I should think almost unique among the children of cultivated parents In consequence of the stern ordinance which I have described not a single fiction was read or told to me during my infancy The rapture of the child who delays the process of going to bed by cajoling "a story" out of his mother or his nurse as he sits upon her knee, well tucked up, at the corner of the nursery fire—this was unknown to me Never, in all my early childhood, did any one address to me the

affecting preamble, "Once upon a time!" I was told about missionaries, but never about pirates; I was familiar with humming-birds, but I had never heard of fairies. Jack the Giant Killer, Rumpelstiltskin and Robin Hood were not of my acquaintance, and though I understood about wolves, Little Red Ridinghood was a stranger even by name. So far as my "dedication" was concerned, I can but think that my parents were in error thus to exclude the imaginary from my outlook upon facts. They desired to make me truthful; the tendency was to make me positive and sceptical. Had they wrapped me in the soft folds of supernatural fancy, my mind might have been longer content to follow their traditions in an unquestioning spirit.

Having easily said what, in those early years, I did not read, I have great difficulty in saying what I did read. But a queer variety of natural history, some of it quite indigestible by my undeveloped mind; many books of travels, mainly of a scientific character, among them voyages of discovery in the South Seas, by which my brain was dimly filled with splendour; some geography and astronomy, both of them sincerely enjoyed; much theology, which I desired to appreciate but could never get my teeth into (if I may venture to say so), and over which my eye and tongue learned to slip without penetrating so that I would read, and read aloud, and with

great propriety of emphasis, page after page without having formed an idea or retained an expression. There was, for instance, a writer on prophecy called Jukes, of whose works each of my parents was inordinately fond, and I was early set to read Jukes aloud to them. I did it glibly, like a machine, but the sight of Jukes's volumes became an abomination to me, and I never formed the outline of a notion what they were about. Later on, a publication called "The Penny Cyclopædia" became my daily, and for a long time almost my sole study; to the subject of this remarkable work I may presently return.

It is difficult to keep anything like chronological order in recording fragments of early recollection, and in speaking of my reading I have been led too far ahead. My memory does not, practically, begin till we returned from certain visits, made with a zoological purpose, to the shores of Devon and Dorset, and settled, early in my fifth year, in a house at Islington, in the north of London. Our circumstances were now more easy; my Father had regular and well-paid literary work; and the house was larger and more comfortable than ever before, though still very simple and restricted. My memories, some of which are exactly dated by certain facts, now become clear and almost abundant. What I do not remember, except

from having it very often repeated to me, is what may be considered the only "clever" thing that I said during an otherwise unillustrious childhood. It was not startlingly "clever," but it may pass. A lady—when I was just four—rather injudiciously showed me a large print of a human skeleton, saying "There! you don't know what that is, do you?" Upon which, immediately and very archly, I replied, "Isn't it a man with the meat off?" This was thought wonderful, and, as it is supposed that I had never had the phenomenon explained to me, it certainly displays some quickness in seizing an analogy. I had often watched my Father, while he soaked the flesh off the bones of fishes and small mammals. If I venture to repeat this trifle, it is only to point out that the system on which I was being educated deprived all things, human life among the rest, of their mystery. The "bare-grinning skeleton of death" was to me, merely a prepared specimen of that featherless plantigrade vertebrate, *homo sapiens*.

As I have said that this anecdote was thought worth repeating, I ought to proceed to say that there was, so far as I can recollect, none of ~~that~~ flattery of childhood which is so often merely a backhanded way of indulging the vanity of parents. My Mother, indeed, would hardly have been human if she had not occasionally entertained herself with the delusion that her

solitary duckling was a cygnet. Thus my Father did not encourage remarking with great affection, and chucking me under the chin that I was "a nice little ordinary boy." My Mother, stung by this want of appreciation, would proceed so far as to declare that she believed that in future times the I R S would be chiefly known as his son's father! (This is a pleasantry frequent in professional families) .

To this my Father, whether convinced or not, would make no demur, and the couple would begin to discuss in my presence the direction which my shining talents would take. In consequence of my dedication to "the Lord's Service" the range of possibilities was much restricted. My Father, who had lived long in the Tropics and who nursed a perpetual nostalgia for "the little lazy isles where the trumpet-orchids blow," leaned towards the field of missionary labour. My Mother, who was cold about foreign missions, preferred to believe that I should be the Charles Wesley of my age, "or perhaps," she had the candour to admit "merely the George Whitfield." I cannot recollect the time when I did not understand that I was going to be a minister of the Gospel.

It is so generally taken for granted that a life strictly dedicated to religion is stiff and dreary, that I may have some difficulty in persuading my readers that, as a matter of fact in

these early days of my childhood, before disease and death had penetrated to our slender society, we were always cheerful and often gay. My parents were playful with one another, and there were certain stock family jests which seldom failed to enliven the breakfast table. My Father and Mother lived so completely in the atmosphere of faith, and were so utterly convinced of their intercourse with God, that, so long as that intercourse was not clouded by sin, to which they were delicately sensitive, they could afford to take the passing hour very lightly. They would even, to a certain extent, treat the surroundings of their religion as a subject of jest, joking very mildly and gently about such things as an attitude at prayer or the nature of a supplication. They were absolutely indifferent to forms. They prayed, seated in their chairs, as willingly as, reversed, upon their knees; no ritual having any significance for them. My Mother was sometimes extremely gay, laughing with a soft, merry sound. What I have since been told of the guileless mirth of nuns in a convent has reminded me of the gaiety of my parents during my early childhood.

So long as I was a mere part of them, without individual existence, and swept on, a satellite, in their atmosphere, I was mirthful when they were mirthful, and grave when they were grave. The mere fact that I had no young companions,

no story books, no outdoor amusements, none of the thousand and one employments provided for other children in more conventional surroundings, did not make me discontented or fretful, because I did not know of the existence of such entertainments. In exchange, I became keenly attentive to the limited circle of interests open to me. Oddly enough, I have no recollection of any curiosity about other children, nor of any desire to speak to them or play with them. They did not enter into my dreams, which were occupied entirely with grown-up people and animals. I had three dolls, to whom my attitude was not very intelligible. Two of these were female, one with a shapeless face of rags, the other in wax. But, in my fifth year, when the Crimean War broke out, I was given a third doll, a soldier, dressed very smartly in a scarlet cloth tunic. I used to put the dolls on three chairs, and harangue them aloud, but my sentiment to them was never confidential, until our maidservant one day, intruding on my audience, and misunderstanding the occasion of it, said: "What? a boy, and playing with a soldier when he's got two lady-dolls to play with?" I had never thought of my dolls as confidants before, but from that time forth I paid a special attention to the soldier, in order to make up to him for Lizzie's unwarrantable insult.

The declaration of war with Russia brought

the first breath of outside life into our Calvinist cloister. My parents took in a daily newspaper, which they had never done before, and events in picturesque places, which my Father and I looked out on the map, were eagerly discussed. One of my vividest early memories can be dated exactly. I was playing about the house, and suddenly burst into the breakfast-room, where, close to the door, sat an amazing figure, a very tall young man, as stiff as my doll, in a gorgeous scarlet tunic. Quite far away from him, at her writing-table my Mother sat with her Bible open before her, and was urging the gospel plan of salvation on his acceptance. She promptly told me to run away and play, but I had seen a great sight. This guardsman was in the act of leaving for the Crimea, and his adventures—he was converted in consequence of my Mother's instruction—were afterwards told by her in a tract, called "The Guardsman of the Alma," of which I believe that more than half a million of copies were circulated. He was killed in that battle, and this added an extraordinary lustre to my dream of him. I see him still in my mind's eye, large, stiff, and unspeakably brilliant, seated, from respect, as near as possible to our parlour door. This apparition gave reality to my subsequent conversations with the soldier doll.

That same victory of the Alma, which was reported in London on my fifth birthday, is also

marked very clearly in my memory by a family circumstance. We were seated at breakfast at our small round table drawn close up to the window my Father with his back to the light. Suddenly he gave a sort of cry and read out the opening sentences from the *Times* announcing a battle in the valley of the Alma. No doubt the strain of national anxiety had been very great, for both he and my Mother seemed deeply excited. He broke off his reading when the fact of the decisive victory was assured and he and my Mother sank simultaneously on their knees in front of their tea and bread and butter while in a loud voice my Father gave thanks to the God of Battles. His patriotism was the more remarkable in that he had schooled himself as he believed, to put his "heavenly citizenship" above all earthly duties. To those who said "Because you are a Christian surely you are not less an Englishman?" he would reply by shaking his head and by saying "I am a citizen of no earthly State." He did not realise that, in reality and to use a cant phrase not yet coined in 1854 there existed in Great Britain no more thorough "Jingo" than he.

Another instance of the remarkable way in which the interests of daily life were mingled, in our strange household with the practice of religion, made an impression upon my memory. We had all three been much excited by a report

that a certain dark geometer-moth, generated in underground stables, had been met with in Islington. Its name, I think is *Boletobia fuliginaria*, and I believe that it is excessively rare in England. We were sitting at family prayers, on a summer morning, I think in 1855, when through the open window a brown moth came sailing. My Mother immediately interrupted the reading of the Bible by saying to my Father, "O! Henry, do you think that can be *Boletobia*?" My Father rose up from the sacred book, examined the insect, which had now perched, and replied: "No! it is only the common Vapourer, *Orgyia antiqua*!" resuming his seat, and the exposition of the Word, without any apology or embarrassment.

In the course of this, my sixth year, there happened a series of minute and soundless incidents which, elementary as they may seem when told, were second in real importance to none in my mental history. The recollection of them confirms me in the opinion that certain leading features in each human soul are inherent to it, and cannot be accounted for by suggestion or training. In my own case, I was most carefully withdrawn; like Princess Blanche in her marble fortress, from every outside influence whatever, yet to me the instinctive life came as unexpectedly as her lover came to her in the basket of roses. What came to me was the con-

sciousness of self, as a force and as a companion, and it came as the result of one or two shocks, which I will relate.

In consequence of hearing so much about an Omniscient God, a being of supernatural wisdom and penetration who was always with us, who made in fact, a fourth in our company, I had come to think of Him, not without awe, but with absolute confidence. My Father and Mother, in their serene discipline of me, never argued with one another, never even differed; their wills seemed absolutely one. My Mother always deferred to my Father, and in his absence spoke of him to me, as if he were all-wise. I confused him in some sense with God; at all events I believed that my Father knew everything and saw everything. One morning in my sixth year, my Mother and I were alone in the morning-room, when my Father came in and announced some fact to us. I was standing on the rug, gazing at him, and when he made this statement, I remember turning quickly, in embarrassment, and looking into the fire. The shock to me was as that of a thunderbolt, for what my Father had said *was not true*. My Mother and I, who had been present at the trifling incident, were aware that it had not happened exactly as it had been reported to him. My Mother gently told him so, and he accepted the correction. Nothing could possibly have been more trifling to my

parents, but to me it meant an epoch. Here was the appalling discovery, never suspected before, that my Father was not as God, and did not know everything. The shock was not caused by any suspicion that he was not telling the truth, as it appeared to him, but by the awful proof that he was not, as I had supposed omniscient.

This experience was followed by another, which confirmed the first, but carried me a great deal further. In our little back-garden, my Father had built up a rockery for ferns and mosses, and from the water-supply of the house he had drawn a leaden pipe so that it pierced upwards through the rockery and produced, when a tap was turned, a pretty silvery parasol of water. The pipe was exposed somewhere near the foot of the rockery. One day, two workmen, who were doing some repairs, left their tools during the dinner-hour in the back-garden, and as I was marching about I suddenly thought that to see whether one of these tools could make a hole in the pipe would be attractive. It did make such a hole, quite easily, and then the matter escaped my mind. But a day or two afterwards, when my father came into dinner, he was very angry. He had turned the tap, and instead of the fountain arching at the summit, there had been a rush of water through a hole at the foot. The rockery was absolutely ruined.

Of course I realised in a moment what I had

done and I sat frozen with alarm, waiting to be denounced. But my Mother remarked on the visit of the plumbers two or three days before, and my Father instantly took up the suggestion. No doubt that was it the mischievous fellows had thought it amusing to stab the pipe and spoil the fountain. No suspicion fell on me, no question was asked of me. I sat there turned to stone, within but outwardly sympathetic and with unchecked appetite.

We attribute, I believe too many moral ideas to little children. It is obvious that in this tremendous juncture, I ought to have been urged forward by good instincts or held back by naughty ones. But I am sure that the fear which I experienced for a short time and which so unexpectedly melted away, was a purely physical one. It had nothing to do with the motions of a contrite heart. As to the destruction of the fountain I was sorry about that for my own sake, since I admired the skipping water extremely, and had had no idea that I was spoiling its display. But the emotions which now thronged within me, and which led me, with an almost unwise alacrity to seek solitude in the back-garden, were not moral at all, they were intellectual. I was not ashamed of having successfully—and so surprisingly—deceived my parents by my crafty silence, I looked upon that as a providential escape, and dismissed all

further thought of it. I had other things to think of.

In the first place, the theory that my Father was omniscient or infallible was now dead and buried. He probably knew very little; in this case he had not known a fact of such importance that if you did not know that, it could hardly matter what you knew. My Father, as a deity, as a natural force of immense prestige, fell in my eyes to a human level. In future, his statements about things in general need not be accepted implicitly. But of all the thoughts which rushed upon my savage and undeveloped brain at this crisis, the most curious was that I had found a companion and a confidant in myself. There was a secret in this world and it belonged to me and to somebody who lived in the same body with me. There were two of us, and we could talk with one another. It is difficult to define impressions so rudimentary, but it is certain that it was in this dual form that the sense of my individuality now suddenly descended upon me, and it is equally certain that it was a great solace to me to find a sympathiser in my own breast.

About this time, my Mother, carried away by the current of her literary and her philanthropic work, left me more and more to my own devices. She was seized with a great enthusiasm; as one of her admirers and disciples has written "she went on her way, sowing beside all waters."

I would not for a moment let it be supposed that I regard her as a Mrs. Jellyby, or that I think she neglected me. But a remarkable work had opened up before her ; after her long years in a mental hermitage, she was drawn forth into the clamorous harvest-field of souls. She developed an unexpected gift of persuasion over strangers whom she met in the omnibus or in the train, and with whom she courageously grappled. This began by her noting, with deep humility and joy, that "I have reason to judge the sound conversion to God of three young persons within a few weeks, by the instrumentality of my conversations with them." At the same time, as another of her biographers has said, "those testimonies to the Blood of Christ, the fruits of her pen, began to be spread very widely, even to the most distant parts of the globe." My Father, too, was at this time at the height of his activity. After breakfast, each of them was amply occupied, perhaps until night-fall ; our evenings we still always spent together. Sometimes my mother took me with her on her "unknown day's employ" ; I recollect pleasant rambles through the city by her side, and the act of looking up at her figure soaring above me. But when all was done, I had hours and hours of complete solitude, in my Father's study, in the back-garden, above all in the garret.

The garret was a fair place. It was a low

lean-to, lighted from the roof. It was wholly unfurnished, except for two objects, an ancient hat-box and a still more ancient skin-trunk. The hat-box puzzled me extremely till one day, asking my Father what it was. I got a distracted answer which led me to believe that it was itself a sort of hat and I made a laborious but repeated effort to wear it. The skin-trunk was absolutely empty but the inside of the lid of it was lined with sheets of what I now know to have been a sensational novel. It was, of course, a fragment, but I read it kneeling on the bare floor, with indescribable rapture. It will be recollected that the idea of fiction, of a deliberately invented story, had been kept from me with entire success. I therefore implicitly believed the tale in the lid of the trunk to be a true account of the sorrows of a lady of title who had to flee the country, and who was pursued into foreign lands by enemies bent upon her ruin. Somebody had an interview with a "minion" in a "mask", I went downstairs and looked up these words in Bailey's "English Dictionary," But ~~was~~ left in darkness as to what they had to do with the lady of title. This ridiculous fragment filled me with delicious fears, I fancied that my Mother who was out so much, might be threatened by dangers of the same sort, and the fact that the narrative came abruptly to an end, in the middle of one of its most thrilling sentences.

wound me up almost to a disorder of wonder and romance.

The preoccupation of my parents threw me more and more upon my own resources. But what are the resources of a solitary child of six? I was never inclined to make friends with servants, nor did our successive maids proffer, so far as I recollect, any advances. Perhaps, with my "dedication" and my grown-up ways of talking, I did not seem to them at all an attractive little boy. I continued to have no companions, or even acquaintances of my own age. I am unable to recollect exchanging two words with another child till after my Mother's death.

The abundant energy which my Mother now threw into her public work did not affect the quietude of our private life. We had some visitors in the day-time, people who came to consult one parent or the other. But they never stayed to a meal, and we never returned their visits. I do not quite know how it was that neither of my parents took me to any of the sights of London, although I am sure it was a question of principle with them. Notwithstanding all our study of natural history, I was never introduced to live wild beasts at the Zoo, nor to dead ones at the British Museum. I can understand better why we never visited a picture-gallery or a concert-room. So far as I can recollect, the only time I was ever taken to any place of entertainment was

when my Father and I paid a visit, long anticipated to the Great Globe in Leicester Square. This was a huge structure, the interior of which one ascended by means of a spiral staircase. It was a poor affair, that was concave in it which should have been convex and my imagination was deeply affronted. I could invent a far better Great Globe than that in my mind's eye in the garret.

Being so restricted then and yet so active, my mind took refuge in an infantile species of natural magic. This contended with the definite ideas of religion which my parents were continuing with too mechanical a persistency to force into my nature and it ran parallel with them. I formed strange superstitions which I can only render intelligible by naming some concrete examples. I persuaded myself that, if I could only discover the proper words to say or the proper passes to make, I could induce the gorgeous birds and butterflies in my Father's illustrated manuals to come to life and fly out of the book, leaving holes behind them. I believed that, when, at the Chapel we sang drearily and slowly, loud hymns of experience and humiliation, I could boom forth with a sound equal to that of dozens of singers, if I could only hit upon the formula. During morning and evening prayers, which were extremely lengthy and fatiguing, I fancied that one of my two selves could sit

up and sit clinging to the cornice and look down on my other self and the rest of us if I could only find the key I laboured for hours in search of these formulas thinking to compass my ends by means absolutely irrational For example I was convinced that if I could only count consecutive numbers long enough without losing one, I should suddenly on reaching some far-distant figure, find myself in possession of the great secret I feel quite sure that nothing external suggested these ideas of magic, and I think it probable that they approached the ideas of savages at a very early stage of development

All this ferment of mind was entirely unobserved by my parents But when I formed the belief that it was necessary for the success of my practical magic, that I should hurt myself, and when, as a matter of fact, I began in extreme secrecy, to run pins into my flesh and bang my joints with books, no one will be surprised to hear that my Mother's attention was drawn to the fact that I was looking "delicate" The notice nowadays universally given to the hygienic rules of life was rare fifty years ago, and among deeply religious people, in particular, fatalistic views of disease prevailed If any one was ill it showed that "the Lord's hand was extended in chastisement," and much prayer was poured forth in order that it might be explained to the sufferer, or to his relations, in what he or they had sinned.

People would, for instance, go on living over a cess-pool, working themselves up into an agony to discover how they had incurred the displeasure of the Lord, but never moving away. As I became very pale and nervous, and slept badly at nights, with visions and loud screams in my sleep, I was taken to a physician, who stripped me and tapped me all over (this gave me some valuable hints for my magical practices), but could find nothing the matter. He recommended, —whatever physicians in such cases always recommend,—but nothing was done. If I was feeble, it was the Lord's Will, and we must acquiesce.

It culminated in a sort of fit of hysterics, when I lost all self-control, and sobbed with tears, and banged my head on the table. While this was proceeding, I was conscious of that dual individuality of which I have already spoken, since while one part of me gave way, and could not resist, the other part in some extraordinary sense seemed standing aloof, much impressed. I was alone with my Father when this crisis suddenly occurred, and I was interested to see that he was greatly alarmed. It was a very long time since we had spent a day out of London, and I said, on being coaxed back to calmness, that I wanted "to go into the country." Like the dying Falstaff, I babbled of green fields. My Father after a little reflection, proposed to take

me to Primrose Hill. I had never heard of the place, and names have always appealed directly to my imagination. I was in the highest degree delighted, and could hardly restrain my impatience. As soon as possible we set forth westward, my hand in my Father's, with the liveliest anticipations. I expected to see a mountain absolutely carpeted with primroses, a terrestrial galaxy like that which covered the hill that led up to Montgomery Castle in Donne's poem. But at length, as we walked from the Chalk Farm direction, a miserable acclivity stole into view—surrounded, even in those days, on most sides by houses, with its grass worn to the buff by millions of boots, and resembling what I meant by "the country" about as much as Poplar resembles Paradise. We sat down on a bench at its inglorious summit, whereupon I burst into tears, and in a heart-rending whisper sobbed, "Oh! Papa, let us go home!"

This was the lachrymose epoch in a career not otherwise given to weeping, for I must tell one more tale of tears. About this time—the autumn of 1855—my parents were disturbed more than once in the twilight, after I had been put to bed, by shrieks from my crib. They would rush up to my side, and find me in great distress, but would be unable to discover the cause of it. The fact was that I was half beside myself with ghostly fears, increased and pointed

by the fact that there had been some daring burglaries in our street. Our servant-maid, who slept at the top of the house, had seen, or thought she saw, upon a moonlight night, the figure of a crouching man, silhouetted against the sky, slip down from the roof and leap into her room. She screamed, and he fled away. Moreover, as if this were not enough for my tender nerves, there had been committed a horrid murder, at a baker's shop just round the corner in the Caledonian Road, to which murder actuality was given to us by the fact that my Mother had been "just thinking" of getting her bread from this shop. Children, I think, were not spared the details of these affairs fifty years ago; at least, I was not, and my nerves were a packet of spilikins.

But what made me scream o' nights, was that when my Mother had tucked me up in bed, and had heard me say my prayer, and had prayed aloud on her knees at my side, and had stolen downstairs, noises immediately began in the room. There was a rustling of clothes, and a slapping of hands, and a gurgling, and a sniffing, and a trotting. These horrible muffled sounds would go on, and die away, and be resumed; I would pray very fervently to God to save me from my enemies; and sometimes I would go to sleep. But on other occasions, my faith and fortitude alike gave way, and I screamed "Mama! Mama!" Then would my parents come bound-

ing up the stairs, and comfort me, and kiss me, and assure me it was nothing And nothing it was while they were there but no sooner had they gone than the ghostly riot recommenced It was at last discovered by my Mother that the whole mischief was due to a card of framed texts, fastened by one nail to the wall, this did nothing when the bedroom door was shut but when it was left open (in order that my parents might hear me call) the card began to gallop in the draught and made the most intolerable noises

Several things tended at this time to alienate my conscience from the line which my Father had so rigidly traced for it The question of the efficacy of prayer which has puzzled wiser heads than mine was begun to trouble me It was insisted on in our household that if anything was desired you should not as my Mother said, "lose any time in seeking for it but ask God to guide you to it" In many junctures of life, this is precisely what in sober fact, they did I will not dwell here on their theories which my Mother put forth with unflinching directness, in her published writings But I found that a difference was made between my privileges in this matter and theirs and this led to many discussions My parents said "Whatever you need, tell Him and He will grant it if it is His will" Very well, I had need of a large painted humming-

top which I had seen in a shop-window in the Caledonian Road. Accordingly, I introduced a supplication for this object into my evening prayer, carefully adding the words: "If it is Thy will." This, I recollect, placed my Mother in a dilemma, and she consulted my Father. Taken, I suppose, at a disadvantage, my Father told me I must not pray for "things like that." To which I answered by another query, "Why?" And I added that he said we ought to pray for things we needed, and that I needed the humming-top a great deal more than I the conversion of the heathen or the restoration of Jerusalem to the Jews, two objects of my nightly supplication which left me very cold.

I have reason to believe, looking back upon this scene, conducted by candle-light in the front parlour, that my Mother was much baffled by the logic of my argument. She had gone so far as to say publicly that no "things or circumstances are too insignificant to bring before the God of the whole earth." I persisted that this covered the case of the humming-top, which was extremely significant to me. I noticed that she held aloof from the discussion, which was carried on with some show of annoyance by my Father. He had never gone quite so far as she did in regard to this question of praying for material things. I am not sure that she was convinced that I ought to have been checked:

but he could not help seeing that it reduced their favourite theory to an absurdity for a small child to exercise the privilege. He ceased to argue, and told me peremptorily that it was not right for me to pray for things like humming-tops, and that I must do it no more. His authority, of course, was paramount, and I yielded; but my faith in the efficacy of prayer was a good deal shaken. The fatal suspicion had crossed my mind that the reason why I was not to pray for the top was because it was too expensive for my parents to buy, that being the usual excuse for not getting things I wished for.

It was about the date of my sixth birthday that I did something very naughty, some act of direct disobedience, for which my Father, after a solemn sermon, chastised me, sacrificially, by giving me several cuts with a cane. This action was justified, as everything he did was justified, by reference to Scripture—"Spare the rod and spoil the child." I suppose that there are some children, of a sullen and lymphatic temperament, who are smartened up and made more wide-awake by a whipping. It is largely a matter of convention, the exercise being endured (I am told) with pride by the infants of our aristocracy, but not tolerated by the lower classes. I am afraid that I proved my inherent vulgarity by being made, not contrite or humble, but furiously angry by this caning.

I cannot account for the flame of rage which it awakened in my bosom. My dear, excellent Father had beaten me, not very severely, without ill-temper, and with the most genuine desire to improve me. But he was not well-advised, especially so far as the "dedication to the Lord's service" was concerned. This same "dedication" had ministered to my vanity, and there are some natures which are not improved by being humiliated. I have to confess with shame that I went about the house for some days with a murderous hatred of my Father locked within my bosom. He did not suspect that the chastisement had not been wholly efficacious, and he bore me no malice; so that after a while, I forgot and thus forgave him. But I do not regard physical punishment as a wise element in the education of proud and sensitive children.

My theological misdeeds culminated, however, in an act so puerile and preposterous that I should not venture to record it if it did not throw some glimmering of light on the subject which I have proposed to myself in writing these pages. My mind continued to dwell on the mysterious question of prayer. It puzzled me greatly to know why, if we were God's children, and if he was watching over us by night and day, we might not supplicate for toys and sweets and smart clothes as well as for the conversion of the heathen. Just at this juncture, we had a

special service at the Room, at which our attention was particularly called to what we always spoke of as "the field of missionary labour." The East was represented among "the saints" by an excellent Irish peer, who had, in his early youth, converted and married a lady of colour; this Asiatic shared in our Sunday morning meetings, and was an object of helpless terror to me; I shrank from her amiable caresses, and vaguely identified her with a personage much spoken of in our family circle, the "Personal Devil."

All these matters drew my thoughts to the subject of idolatry, which was severely censured at the missionary meeting. I cross-examined my Father very closely as to the nature of this sin, and pinned him down to the categorical statement that idolatry consisted in praying to any one or anything but God himself. Wood and stone, in the words of the hymn, were peculiarly liable to be bowed down to by the heathen in their blindness. I pressed my Father further on this subject, and he assured me that God would be very angry, and would signify his anger, if any one, in a Christian country, bowed down to wood and stone. I cannot recall why I was so pertinacious on this subject, but I remember that my Father became a little restive under my cross-examination. I determined, however, to test the matter for myself, and one morning, when both my parents were safely out of the

house, I prepared for the great act of heresy. I was in the morning-room on the ground-floor, where, with much labour, I hoisted a small chair on the table close to the window. My heart was now beating as if it would leap out of my side, but I pursued my experiment. I knelt down on the carpet in front of the table and looking up I said my daily prayer in a loud voice, only substituting the address "O Chair!" for the habitual one.

Having carried this act of idolatry safely through, I waited to see what would happen. It was a fine day, and I gazed up at the slip of white sky above the houses opposite, and expected something to appear in it. God would certainly exhibit his anger in some terrible form, and would chastise my impious and wilful action. I was very much alarmed, but still more excited; I breathed the high, sharp air of defiance. But nothing happened; there was not a cloud in the sky, not an unusual sound in the street. Presently I was quite sure that nothing would happen. I had committed idolatry, flagrantly and deliberately, and God did not care.

The result of this ridiculous act was not to make me question the existence and power of God; those were forces which I did not dream of ignoring. But what it did was to lessen still further my confidence in my Father's knowledge of the Divine mind. My Father had said, posi-

tively, that if I worshipped a thing made of wood, God would manifest his anger. I had then worshipped a chair, made (or partly made) of wood, and God had made no sign whatever. My Father, therefore, was not really acquainted with the Divine practice in cases of idolatry. And with that, dismissing the subject, I dived again into the unplumbed depths of the "Penny Cyclopædia."

CHAPTER III

THAT I might die in my early childhood was a thought which frequently recurred to the mind of my Mother. She endeavoured, with a Roman fortitude, to face it without apprehension. Soon after I had completed my fifth year she had written as follows in her secret journal :

“Should we be called on to weep over the early grave of the dear one whom now we are endeavouring to train for heaven, may we be able to remember that we never ceased to pray for and watch over him. It is easy, comparatively, to watch over an infant. Yet shall I be sufficient for these things? I am not. But God is sufficient. In his strength I have begun the warfare, in his strength I will persevere, and I will faint not till either I myself or my little one is beyond the reach of earthly solicitude.”

“That either she or I would be called away from earth, and that our physical separation

was at hand, seems to have been always vaguely present in my Mother's dreams, as an obstinate conviction to be carefully recognised and jealously guarded against.

It was not, however, until the course of my seventh year, that the tragedy occurred, which altered the whole course of our family existence. My Mother had hitherto seemed strong and in good health; she had even made the remark to my Father, that "sorrow and pain, the badges of Christian discipleship," appeared to be withheld from her. On her birthday, which was to be her last, she had written these ejaculations in her locked diary :

"Lord, forgive the sins of the past, and help me to be faithful in future! May this be a year of much blessing, a year of jubilee! May I be kept lowly, trusting, loving! May I have more blessing than in all former years combined! May I be happier as a wife, mother, sister, writer, mistress, friend!"

But a symptom began to alarm her and in the beginning of May, having consulted a local physician without being satisfied, she went to see a specialist in a northern suburb in whose judgment she had great confidence. This occasion I recollect with extreme vividness. I had been put to bed by my Father, in itself a noteworthy event. My crib stood near a window overlooking

the street; my parents' ancient four-poster, a relic of the eighteenth century, hid me from the door, but I could see the rest of the room. After falling asleep on this particular evening, I awoke silently, surprised to see two lighted candles on the table, and my Father seated writing by them. I also saw a little meal arranged.

While I was wondering at all this, the door opened, and my Mother entered the room; she emerged from behind the bed-curtains, with her bonnet on, having returned from her expedition. My Father rose hurriedly, pushing back his chair, and greeted her by exclaiming: "Well, what does he say?" There was a pause, while my Mother seemed to be steadying her voice, and then she replied, loudly and distinctly, "He says it is—" and she mentioned one of the most cruel maladies by which our poor mortal nature can be tormented. Then I saw them fold one another in a silent embrace, and presently sink together out of sight on their knees, at the further side of the bed, whereupon my Father lifted up his voice in prayer. Neither of them had noticed me, and now I lay back on my pillow and fell asleep.

Next morning, when we three sat at breakfast, my mind reverted to the scene of the previous night. With my eyes on my plate, as I was cutting up my food, I asked, casually, "What is—?" mentioning the disease whose unfamiliar

name I had heard from my bed. Receiving no reply, I looked up to discover why my question was not answered, and I saw my parents gazing at each other with lamentable eyes. In some way, I know not how, I was conscious of the presence of an incommunicable mystery, and I kept silence, though tortured with curiosity, nor did I ever repeat my inquiry.

About a fortnight later, my Mother began to go three times a week all the long way from Islington to Pimlico, in order to visit a certain practitioner, who undertook to apply a special treatment to her case. This involved great fatigue and distress to her, but so far as I was personally concerned it did me a great deal of good. I invariably accompanied her, and when she was very tired and weak, I enjoyed the pride of believing that I protected her. The movement, the exercise, the occupation, lifted my morbid fears and superstitions like a cloud. The medical treatment to which my poor Mother was subjected was very painful, and she had a peculiar sensitiveness to pain. She carried on her evangelical work as long as she possibly could, continuing to converse with her fellow passengers on spiritual matters. It was wonderful that a woman, so reserved and proud as she by nature was, could conquer so completely her natural timidity. In those last months, she scarcely ever got into a railway carriage or into an omnibus,

without presently offering tracts to the persons sitting within reach of her, or endeavouring to begin a conversation with some one on the sufficiency of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse the human heart from sin. Her manners were so gentle and persuasive, she looked so innocent, her small, sparkling features were lighted up with so much benevolence, that I do not think she ever met with discourtesy or roughness. Imitative im-
that I was, I sometimes took part in these strange conversations, and was mightily puffed up by compliments paid, in whispers, to my infant piety. But my Mother very properly discouraged this, as tending in me to spiritual pride.

If my parents, in their desire to separate themselves from the world, had regretted that through their happiness they seemed to have forfeited the Christian privilege of affliction, they could not continue to complain of any absence of temporal adversity. Everything seemed to combine, in the course of this fatal year 1856, to harass and alarm them. Just at the moment when illness created a special drain upon their resources, their slender income, instead of being increased, was seriously diminished. There is little sympathy felt in this world of rhetoric for the silent sufferings of the genteel poor, yet there is no class that deserves a more charitable commiseration.

At the best of times, the money which my parents had to spend was an exiguous and an

inelastic sum. Strictly economical, proud—in an old-fashioned mode now quite out of fashion—to conceal the fact of their poverty, painfully scrupulous to avoid giving inconvenience to shop-people, tradesmen or servants, their whole financial career had to be carried on with the adroitness of a campaign through a hostile country. But now, at the moment when fresh pressing claims were made on their resources, my Mother's small capital suddenly disappeared. It had been placed, on bad advice (they were as children in such matters), in a Cornish mine, the grotesque name of which, Wheal Maria, became familiar to my ears. One day the river Tamar, in a playful mood, broke into Wheal Maria, and not a penny more was ever lifted from that unfortunate enterprise. About the same time, a small annuity which my Mother had inherited also ceased to be paid.

On my Father's books and lectures, therefore, the whole weight now rested, and that at a moment when he was depressed and unnerved by anxiety. It was contrary to his principles to borrow money, so that it became necessary to pay doctor's and chemist's bills punctually, and yet to carry on the little household with the very small margin. Each artifice of economy was now exercised to enable this to be done without falling into debt, and every branch of expenditure was cut down: clothes, books, the little garden which was my

Father's pride, all felt the pressure of new poverty. Even our food, which had always been simple, now became Spartan indeed, and I am sure that my Mother often pretended to have no appetite that there might remain enough to satisfy my hunger. Fortunately my Father was able to take us away in the autumn for six weeks by the sea in Wales, the expenses of this tour being paid for by a professional engagement, so that my seventh birthday was spent in an ecstasy of happiness, on golden sands, under a brilliant sky, and in sight of the glorious azure ocean beating in from an infinitude of melting horizons. Here, too, my Mother, perched in a nook of the high rocks, surveyed the west, and forgot, for a little while, her weakness and the gnawing, grinding pain.

But in October, our sorrows seemed to close in upon us. We went back to London, and for the first time in their married life, my parents were divided. My Mother was now so seriously weaker that the omnibus-journeys to Pimlico became impossible. My Father could not leave his work, and so my Mother and I had to take a gloomy lodging close to the doctor's house. The experiences upon which I presently entered were of a nature in which childhood rarely takes a part. I was now my Mother's sole and ceaseless companion; the silent witness of her suffering, of her patience, of her vain and delusive attempts to

obtain alleviation of her anguish. For nearly three months I breathed the atmosphere of pain, saw no other light, heard no other sounds, thought no other thoughts, than those which accompany physical suffering and weariness. To my memory these weeks seem years; I have no measure of their monotony. The lodgings were bare and yet tawdry; out of dingy windows we looked from a second storey upon a dull small street, drowned in autumnal fog. My father came to see us when he could, but otherwise, save when we made our morning expedition to the doctor, or when a slatternly girl waited upon us with our distasteful meals, we were alone,—without any other occupation than to look forward to that occasional abatement of suffering which was what we hoped for most.

It is difficult for me to recollect how these interminable hours were spent. But I read aloud in a great part of them. I have now in my mind's cabinet a picture of my chair turned towards the window, partly that I might see the book more distinctly, partly not to see quite so distinctly that dear patient figure rocking on her sofa, or leaning, like a funeral statue, like a muse upon a monument, with her head on her arms against the mantelpiece. I read the Bible every day and at much length; also,—with I cannot but think some praiseworthy patience,—a book of incommunicable dreariness, called Newton's

"Thoughts on the Apocalypse" Newton bore a great resemblance to my old aversion, Jukes, and I made a sort of playful compact with my Mother that if I read aloud a certain number of pages out of "Thoughts on the Apocalypse," as a reward I should be allowed to recite "my own favourite hymns" Among these there was one which united her suffrages with mine. Both of us extremely admired the piece by Toplady which begins :

What though my frail eyelids refuse
Continual watchings to keep,
And, punctual as midnight renews,
Demand the refreshment of sleep.

To this day, I cannot repeat this hymn without a sense of poignant emotion, nor can I pretend to decide how much of this is due to its merit and how much to the peculiar nature of the memories it recalls. But it might be as rude as I genuinely think it to be skilful and I should continue to regard it as a sacred poem. Among all my childish memories none is clearer than my looking up,—after reading, in my high treble,

Kind Author and Ground of my hope,
Thee, Thee for my God I avow;
My glád Ebenezer set up,
And own Thou hast help'd me till now;
I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my defence Thou hast prov'd,
Nor wilt Thou relinquish at last
A sinner so signally lov'd,—

and hearing my Mother, her eyes brimming with tears and her alabastrine fingers tightly locked together, murmur in unconscious repetition :

Nor wilt Thou relinquish at last
A sinner so signally lov'd.

In our lodgings at Pimlico I came across a piece of verse which exercised a lasting influence on my taste. It was called "The Cameronian's Dream," and it had been written by a certain James Hyslop, a schoolmaster on a man-of-war. I do not know how it came into my possession, but I remember it was adorned by an extremely dim and ill-executed wood-cut of a lake surrounded by mountains, with tombstones in the foreground. This lugubrious frontispiece positively fascinated me, and lent a further gloomy charm to the ballad itself. It was in this copy of mediocre verses that the sense of romance first appealed to me, the kind of nature-romance which is connected with hills, and lakes, and the picturesque costumes of old times. The following stanza, for instance, brought a revelation to me :

'Twas a dream of those ages of darkness and blood,
When the minister's home was the mountain and
"wood

When in Wellwood's dark valley the standard of
Zion,

All bloody and torn, 'mong the heather was lying.

I persuaded my Mother to explain to me what it was all about, and she told me of the affliction

of the Scottish saints, their flight to the waters and the wilderness, their cruel murder while they were singing "their last song to the God of Salvation." I was greatly fired, and the following stanza, in particular, reached my ideal of the Sublime :

The muskets were flashing, the blue swords were gleaming,

The helmets were cleft, and the red blood was streaming,

The heavens grew dark, and the thunder was rolling.

When in Wellwood's dark muirlands the mighty were falling.

Twenty years later I met with the only other person whom I have ever encountered who had even heard of "The Cameronian's Dream." This was Robert Louis Stevenson, who had been greatly struck by it when he was about my age. Probably the same ephemeral edition of it reached, at the same time, each of our pious households.

As my Mother's illness progressed, she could neither sleep, save by the use of opiates, nor rest, except in a sloping posture, propped up by many pillows. It was my great joy, and a pleasant diversion, to be allowed to shift, beat up, and rearrange these pillows, a task which I learned to accomplish not too awkwardly. Her sufferings, I believe, were principally caused by the violence of the medicaments to which her doctor, who

was trying a new and fantastic "cure," thought it proper to subject her. Let those who take a pessimistic view of our social progress ask themselves whether such tortures could to-day be inflicted on a delicate patient, or whether that patient would be allowed to exist, in the greatest misery, in a lodging with no professional nurse to wait upon her, and with no companion but a little helpless boy of seven years of age. Time passes smoothly and swiftly, and we do not perceive the mitigations which he brings in his hands. Everywhere, in the whole system of human life, improvements, alleviations, ingenious appliances and humane inventions are being introduced to lessen the great burden of suffering.

If we were suddenly transplanted into the world of only fifty years ago, we should be startled and even horror-stricken by the wretchedness to which the step backwards would re-introduce us. It was in the very year of which I am speaking, a year of which my personal memories are still vivid, that Sir James Simpson received the Monthyon prize as a recognition of his discovery of the use of anæsthetics. Can our thoughts embrace the mitigation of human torment which the application of chloroform alone has caused? My early experiences, I confess, made me singularly conscious, at an age when one should know nothing about these things, of that torrent of sorrow and anguish and terror which flow

under all the footsteps of man. Within my childish conscience, already, some dim inquiry was awake as to the meaning of this mystery of pain—

The floods of the tears meet and gather;
The sound of them all grows like thunder
O into what bosom, I wonder,
Is poured the whole sorrow of years?
For Eternity only seems keeping
Account of the great human weeping;
May God then, the Maker and Father,
May He find a place for the tears!

In my Mother's case, the savage treatment did no good; it had to be abandoned, and a day or two before Christmas, while the fruits were piled in the shop-fronts and the butchers were shouting outside their forests of carcasses, my Father brought us back in a cab through the streets to Islington, a feeble and languishing company. Our invalid bore the journey fairly well, enjoying the air, and pointing out to me the glittering evidences of the season, but we paid heavily for her little entertainment, since, at her earnest wish the window of the cab having been kept open, she caught a cold, which became, indeed, the technical cause of a death that no applications could now have long delayed.

Yet she lingered with us six weeks more, and during this time I again relapsed, very naturally, into solitude. She now had the care of a practised

woman, one of the "saints" from the Chapel, and I was only permitted to pay brief visits to her bedside. That I might not be kept indoors all day and every day, a man, also connected with the meeting-house, was paid a trifle to take me out for a walk each morning. This person, who was by turns familiar and truculent, was the object of my intense dislike. Our relations became, in the truest sense, "forced"; I was obliged to walk by his side, but I held that I had no further responsibility to be agreeable, and after a while I ceased to speak to him, or to answer his remarks. On one occasion, poor dreary man, he met a friend and stopped to chat with him. I considered this act to have dissolved the bond; I skipped lightly from his side, examined several shop-windows which I had been forbidden to look into, made several darts down courts and up passages, and finally, after a delightful morning, returned home, having known my directions perfectly. My official conductor, in a shocking condition of fear, was crouching by the area-rails looking up and down the street. He darted upon me, in a great rage, to know "what I meant by it?" I drew myself up as tall as I could, hissed "Blind leader of the blind!" at him, and, with this inappropriate (but very effective) Parthian shot, slipped into the house.

When it was quite certain that no alleviations and no medical care could prevent, or even any

longer postpone, the departure of my Mother, I believe that my future conduct became the object of her greatest and her most painful solicitude. She said to my Father that the worst trial of her faith came from the feeling that she was called upon to leave that child whom she had so carefully trained from his earliest infancy for the peculiar service of the Lord, without any knowledge of what his further course would be. In many conversations, she most tenderly and closely urged my Father, who, however, needed no urging, to watch with unceasing care over my spiritual welfare. As she grew nearer her end, it was observed that she became calmer, and less troubled by fears about me. The intensity of her prayers and hopes seemed to have a prevailing force; it would have been a sin to doubt that such supplications, such confidence and devotion, such an emphasis of will, should not be rewarded by an answer from above in the affirmative. She was able, she said, to leave me "in the hands of her loving Lord," or, on another occasion, "to the care of her covenant God."

Although her faith was so strong and simple, my Mother possessed no quality of the mystic. She never pretended to any visionary gifts, believed not at all in dreams or portents, and encouraged nothing in herself or others which was superstitious or fantastic. In order to realise her condition of mind, it is necessary, I think,

to accept the view that she had formed a definite conception of the absolute, unmodified and historical veracity, in its direct and obvious sense, of every statement contained within the covers of the Bible. For her, and for my Father, nothing was symbolic, nothing allegorical or allusive, in any part of Scripture, except what was, in so many words, proffered as a parable or a picture. Pushing this to its extreme limit, and allowing nothing for the changes of scene or time or race, my parents read injunctions to the Corinthian converts without any suspicion that what was apposite in dealing with half-breed Achaian colonists of the first century might not exactly apply to respectable English men and women of the nineteenth. They took it, text by text, as if no sort of difference existed between the surroundings of Trimalchion's feast and those of a City dinner. Both my parents, I think, were devoid of sympathetic imagination; in my Father, I am sure, it was singularly absent. Hence, although their faith was so strenuous that many persons might have called it fanatical, there was no mysticism about them. They went rather to the opposite extreme, to the cultivation of a rigid and iconoclastic literalness.

This was curiously exemplified in the very lively interest which they both took in what is called "the interpretation of prophecy," and particularly in unwrapping the dark sayings

bound up in the Book of Revelation. In their impartial survey of the Bible, they came to this collection of solemn and splendid visions, sinister and obscure, and they had no intention of allowing these to be merely stimulating to the fancy, or vaguely doctrinal in symbol. When they read of seals broken and of vials poured forth, of the star which was called Wormwood that fell from Heaven, and of men whose hair was as the hair of women and their teeth as the teeth of lions, they did not admit for a moment that these vivid mental pictures were of a poetic character, but they regarded them as positive statements, in guarded language, describing events which were to happen, and could be recognised when they did happen. It was the explanation, the perfectly prosaic and positive explanation, of all these wonders which drew them to study the Habershons and the Newtons whose books they so much enjoyed. They were helped by these guides to recognise in wild Oriental visions direct statements regarding Napoleon III. and Pope Pius IX. and the King of Piedmont, historic figures which they conceived as foreshadowed, in language which admitted of plain interpretation, under the names of denizens of Babylon and companions of the Wild Beast.

My Father was in the habit of saying, in later years, that no small element in his wedded happiness had been the fact that my Mother and he

were of one mind in the interpretation of Sacred Prophecy. Looking back, it appears to me that this unusual mental exercise was almost their only relaxation, and that in their economy it took the place which is taken, in profaner families, by cards or the piano. It was a distraction; it took them completely out of themselves. During those melancholy weeks at Pimlico, I read aloud another work of the same nature as those of Newton and Habershon, the "*Horæ Apocalypticæ*" of a Mr. Elliott. This was written, I think, in a less disagreeable style, and certainly it was less opaquely obscure to me. My recollection distinctly is that when my Mother could endure nothing else, the arguments of this book took her thoughts away from her pain and lifted her spirits. Elliott saw "the queenly arrogance of Popery" everywhere, and believed that the very last days of Babylon the Great were come. Lest I say what may be thought extravagant, let me quote what my Father wrote in his diary at the time of my Mother's death. He said that the thought that Rome was doomed (as seemed not impossible in 1857) so affected my Mother that it "irradiated her dying hours with an assurance that was like the light of the Morning Star, the harbinger of the rising sun."

After our return to Islington, there was a complete change in my relation to my Mother. At Pimlico, I had been all-important, her only

companion, her friend, her confidant. But now that she was at home again, people and things combined to separate me from her. Now, and for the first time in my life, I no longer slept in her room, no longer sank to sleep under her kiss, no longer saw her mild eyes smile on me with the earliest sunshine. Twice a day, after breakfast and before I went to rest, I was brought to her bedside; but we were never alone, other people, sometimes strange people, were there. We had no cosy talk; often she was too weak to do more than pat my hand: her loud and almost constant cough terrified and harassed me. I felt, as I stood, awkwardly and shyly, by her high bed, that I had shrunk into a very small and insignificant figure, that she was floating out of my reach, that all things, but I knew not what nor how, were coming to an end. She herself was not herself; her head, that used to be held so erect, now rolled or sank upon the pillow; the sparkle was all extinguished from those bright, dear eyes. I could not understand it; I meditated long, long upon it all in my infantile darkness, in the garret, or in the little slip of a cold room where my bed was now placed; and a great, blind anger against I knew not what awakened in my soul.

The two retreats which I have mentioned were now all that was left to me. In the back-parlour some one from outside gave me occasional lessons,

of a desultory character. The breakfast-room was often haunted by visitors, unknown to me by face or name,—ladies, who used to pity me and even to pet me, until I became nimble in escaping from their caresses. Everything seemed to be unfixed, uncertain; it was like being on the platform of a railway station waiting for a train. In all this time, the agitated, nervous presence of my Father, whose pale face was permanently drawn with anxiety, added to my perturbation, and I became miserable, stupid, as if I had lost my way in a cold fog.

Had I been older and more intelligent, of course, it might have been of him and not of myself that I should have been thinking. As I now look back upon that tragic time, it is for him that my heart bleeds,—for them both, so singularly fitted as they were to support and cheer one another in an existence which their own innate and cultivated characteristics had made little hospitable to other sources of comfort. This is not to be dwelt on here. But what must be recorded was the extraordinary tranquillity, the serene and sensible resignation, with which at length my parents faced the awful hour. Language cannot utter what they suffered, but there was no rebellion, no repining; in their case even an atheist might admit that the overpowering miracle of grace was mightily efficient.

It seems almost cruel to the memory of their

opinions that the only words which rise to my mind, the only ones which seem in the least degree adequate to describe the attitude of my parents, had fallen from the pen of one whom, in their want of imaginative sympathy, they had regarded as anathema. But John Henry Newman might have come from the contemplation of my Mother's death-bed when he wrote: "All the trouble which the world inflicts upon us, and which flesh cannot but feel,--sorrow, pain, care, bereavement,—these avail not to disturb the tranquillity and the intensity with which faith gazes at the Divine Majesty." It was "tranquillity," it was not the rapture of the mystic. Almost in the last hour of her life, urged to confess her "joy" in the Lord, my Mother, rigidly honest, meticulous in self-analysis, as ever, replied: "I have peace, but not joy. It would not do to go into eternity with a lie in my mouth."

When the very end approached, and her mind was growing clouded, she gathered her strength together to say to my Father, "I shall walk with Him in white. Won't you take your lamb and walk with me?" Confused with sorrow and alarm, my Father failed to understand her meaning. She became agitated, and she repeated two or three times: "Take our lamb, and walk with me!" Then my Father comprehended, and pressed me forward; her hand fell softly upon mine and she seemed content. Thus was

my dedication, that had begun in my cradle, sealed with the most solemn, the most poignant and irresistible insistence, at the death-bed of the holiest and purest of women. But what a weight, intolerable as the burden of Atlas, to lay on the shoulders of a little fragile child !

